

3 FAH-2 H-300 PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

3 FAH-2 H-310 PERSONNEL OPERATIONS ABROAD

*(TL:FSNH-027; 08-21-2003)
(Office of Origin DIR)*

3 FAH-2 H-311 THE PERSONNEL OFFICER

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The Personnel Officer, by delegation of authority, either directly or from the *Management officer*, is responsible for planning, developing, and implementing the Foreign Service National (FSN) personnel program. Your success will depend in large part on being known to, and consulted by, the operating officials at post. The extent to which they will call upon you to help them will, in turn, depend on:

 Your technical competence in mastering and performing the details of the personnel function;

 Your knowledge of the staffing needs for the post's activities and programs;

 Your ability to integrate personnel management with other management areas; and

 Your attitude of service.

A sympathetic and courteous consideration of problems brought to you, a wholehearted effort to help solve them, an ability to satisfy with a thoughtful explanation even those whose requests you must deny, and a common sense interpretation of regulations will strengthen your effectiveness.

3 FAH-2 H-312 THE FSN PERSONNEL FUNCTION

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The FSN personnel program embraces the full range of personnel activities. Although it is based on prevailing practice in the locality, some individual functions can be pursued jointly for FSN and American employees with only minor procedural variances required. The Awards Program is an example of a function where a uniform policy and similar procedures apply, thus making it both feasible and desirable to administer as a functional unit for all employees of the Mission.

a. General administrative and managerial functions for which you are responsible include the following:

(1) To know and understand the major programs and related officer responsibilities in the Embassy, the agencies, and subordinate posts serviced by the Mission, so that you can provide the full support and services which they need.

(2) To ensure that personnel resources of the Mission are properly and effectively utilized by:

(a) Participating in the preparation of the annual budget estimates to assure that personnel needs are adequately provided for;

(b) Recommending adjustments in staffing to better support Mission requirements; and

(c) Assigning personnel to jobs most suited to their interests and abilities, within the framework of your authority.

(3) To keep operating officials, employees, other agencies and subordinate posts up to date on all changes in personnel policies, programs, regulations, and procedures which will impact on their programs or personal status. Employees should never learn through the rumor mill about a matter, which will affect their career or personal affairs. Direct personal notification, generally through the employee's supervisor, is the proper channel.

b. The FSN personnel program for which you are responsible requires that you:

(1) Develop and implement personnel policies and procedures in cooperation with other foreign affairs agencies.

(2) Administer the Interagency Position Classification Plan at post to ensure equitable treatment of employees and prudent expenditure of public funds.

(3) Develop, coordinate with other agencies represented at post, and maintain in a current status a local compensation plan for the Mission and for each constituent post which will provide salaries and benefits commensurate with those customarily paid by other competitive employers in the locality thus enabling the post to recruit and retain qualified FSN employees.

(4) Develop and administer an effective recruitment and internal placement program which will attract the best-qualified applicants for Mission vacancies.

(5) Develop and present a good orientation program for all newly recruited personnel.

(6) Obtain realistic and equitable performance evaluations for FSN employees by:

(a) Emphasizing to supervisors the need for objective and timely performance reports; and

(b) Reviewing performance evaluation reports and discussing deficiencies with the preparing official.

(7) Establish and maintain training programs, as needed, to enable employees to meet their work requirements and, to the degree possible, to develop career potential.

(8) Develop and implement an effective employee-management program by:

(a) Anticipating and identifying sources of employee-management difficulties and taking action to amend situations;

(b) Ensuring that complaints are handled expeditiously and equitably, and that the post's grievance procedures are well understood and operable;

(c) Assuring active support of equal employment opportunity programs; and

(d) Keeping employees informed about personnel regulations and benefits, which directly affect them.

(9) Encourage recognition of employees by promoting an active awards program and by publicizing notable occurrences.

(10) Assure FSN participation in the medical service program at the post, to the extent authorized.

(11) Ensure that leave is scheduled so that the needs of the Mission are met and employees are assured of adequate rest and relaxation.

(12) Ensure efficient maintenance of personnel records, the timely submission of personnel reports, and the preparation of correspondence with the Department on personnel matters, and the proper disposition of personnel files.

3 FAH-2 H-313 ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

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(See 2 FAM 125)

Many posts abroad, for the sake of economy and effective administration, combine the administrative support activities of the foreign affairs agencies (State, AID, USIA, Commerce, Agriculture) and other agencies in the Mission. State provides this support under interagency agreements, paid for by each participating agency.

Some posts make this clear to administrative staffs by distributing a statement giving a breakdown of salaries and positions paid for by the Department and by the other agencies. This can be, and often is, a revelation both to American and FSN employees in the administrative area.

A successful personnel program serves all agencies in the same spirit and with the same efficiency as it does its own agency. Good working relationships begin with an early visit to the supported agencies to assure a common understanding of the services to be provided and to identify any problems.

Continuing close liaison is essential to keep abreast of program developments, so that new personnel requirements can be anticipated and action taken to provide the service the agencies fund. At some posts administrative personnel meet regularly to discuss mutual issues and become better acquainted with each agency's program goals.

3 FAH-2 H-314 DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

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Basic appointing authority has been delegated to the heads of overseas establishments, that is, the Chief of Mission (COM) for State, the AID Mission Director, AID Representative or heads of other AID organizations, the PAO for USIA, and for all other agencies the ranking officer in country. To the extent necessary for efficient operations, and/or as authorized by their headquarters, heads of overseas establishments may re-delegate these authorities to their designated representatives. In State and USIA appointing authority is delegated to the Administrative Counselor/Officer with authority to re-delegate to the U.S. Personnel Officer. With the exception of Agriculture, which retains "appointing authority", agencies at post usually re-delegate this authority to the State *Management officer* and/or directly to the U.S. Personnel Officer when the Embassy provides recruitment services. (Appointing authority includes authority for approval of appointments, within grade increases, promotions and awards.)

Whether or not you have signatory appointing authority in no way affects your responsibility for assuring the propriety and correctness of any personnel action processed by the Personnel Office. Although you may not sign a particular personnel action, you should initial the document before presenting it for signature thus indicating that you have reviewed it, that it complies with all requirements, and that it has been prepared correctly.

3 FAH-2 H-315 POLICY COORDINATION

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(See 2 FAM 120)

In consonance with the provisions of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, the Department of State and the headquarters of the other agencies of the Executive Branch employing FSN employees at our diplomatic and consular Missions overseas are emphasizing the importance of Mission-wide cooperation and consultation in the implementation and administration of all FSN personnel policy. The interagency approach to the post's FSN classification appeal process established by the Interagency Handbook on Local Employee Position Classification (LEPCH) issued in November 1978 and subsequent amendments (See Chapter 3 FAH-2 H-400) is an example of the level of cooperation and consultation the agencies' headquarters desire. To the maximum extent possible, the U.S. Government should act in a manner, which reflects a single employer image in its personnel management of all FSN employees.

In cases where the needs of a given agency at an overseas Mission require a separate policy on any FSN personnel issue, the issue should be referred to the agency headquarters and the Department of State (PER/FSN) for an advisory opinion before the policy is initially implemented or changed.

Posts should review existing FSN personnel policy, and if a uniform policy does not exist in any area of FSN personnel matters, other agencies should be consulted, and an attempt made to establish a uniform policy. In cases where Mission-wide agreement cannot be achieved, the issue should be referred to headquarters as indicated above.

In establishing new policies, an open-minded approach and willingness to understand differences in degree of responsibility and qualification requirements of FSN positions in other agencies are basic. Frequent and in-depth discussions with representatives of other agencies at post will contribute to a better understanding of the needs of all concerned and will result in policies better suited to meet those needs. This, in turn, brings support to established policies and facilitates program accomplishment. If heads of other agencies do not have prior experience managing a program, which includes FSN personnel, during your initial contact you should offer and provide guidance and explanations of any unfamiliar terms and policies.

3 FAH-2 H-316 SUBORDINATE POST SUPPORT

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The COM is responsible for the programs of all posts in his or her area of jurisdiction. Personnel policies developed at the principal post, therefore, are countrywide policies and should take into account the problems and special needs of all posts under the jurisdiction of the COM.

As Personnel Officer you are responsible for coordination between the Embassy and subordinate posts on all personnel matters. Your working relationships with counterparts should assure a free flow of information between posts on problems, policies, and plans. Constituent posts will look to you to keep them informed of all personnel policies and procedures, and to provide guidance.

It is often required that a constituent post route personnel correspondence to the Department, or other foreign affairs agency headquarters, through the Embassy. The principal post may be able to resolve the problem, provide whatever countrywide coordination is needed, lend support to the request, etc.

Constituent posts may feel isolated from the mainstream of the Mission's work and rarely have the technical expertise available in the Embassy. As Personnel Officer, you can do much to ameliorate both problems by establishing close working relationships and by your attitude of service.

3 FAH-2 H-317 COMMUNICATING WITH THE DEPARTMENT

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Post inquiries regarding FSN personnel policy or regulations should be directed to PER/FSN with an information copy to the appropriate regional bureau or agency.

On operational personnel matters correspondence should be directed to the appropriate regional bureau or agency, unless directives specifically indicate a different routing.

3 FHA-2 H-318 FSN'S AND THE COMMUNITY LIAISON OFFICE

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A cooperative working relationship needs to be developed between the Personnel Office staff and the Community Liaison Office (CLO). The many common areas of interest and responsibility indicate a need for coordination and joint endeavor. The FSN workforce can make a positive contribution by assisting in meeting newly assigned personnel upon their arrival in country, in developing information to be used in orientation handouts, and in the planning of the post orientation program. The FSN staff will be helpful particularly in developing information on community services, restaurants, cultural events, etc.

3 FAH-2 H-319 COOPERATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

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At a few posts U.S. firms and other foreign missions look to the Embassy for information on local personnel practices and problems. Some posts have a personnel management organization composed of representative management personnel from U.S. and local business firms, banks, and other foreign missions. These representatives meet periodically to discuss wage issues, recruitment difficulties, pirating, and other management concerns. A Personnel Officer can contribute to such an organization, and also can learn much from the experiences and points of view of others.